

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace the previous version, and the listing of claims:

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A leg protection device for protecting a leg of an occupant in a vehicle, comprising:

a casing,

an airbag disposed in the casing in a folded state to be inflated in front of the leg of the occupant, said airbag having a front portion facing the occupant and a rear portion opposite to the front portion in an inflated state, ~~said airbag having a folded portion folded between the front portion and the rear portion at a perimeter thereof,~~ and

a gas generating ~~means~~ device attached to the airbag for inflating the airbag,

wherein said airbag comprises an upper folded portion folded between the front portion and the rear portion at an upper side of the airbag in a spread state of the airbag, left and right side portions folded over a center area of the airbag with the upper folded portion such that parts of the left and right side portions to be folded later are located laterally outside the casing in a partly folded state of the airbag, and an intermediate folded portion, in another partly folded state of the airbag, having a width to be able to enter into the casing in a direction perpendicular to the left and right side portions, said intermediate folded portion being obtained by folding rearwardly a part of the airbag with the upper folded portion and the left and right side portions several times, said parts of the left and right side portions located laterally outside the casing being folded on a center area to be completely disposed inside the casing in the folded state.

2-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended, withdrawn) A leg protection device according to claim 1, wherein each of said left and right side portions has a ~~said folded portion is formed at an upper side and a lateral side~~ folded between the front portion and the rear portion in the spread state of the airbag.

5. (currently amended, withdrawn) A leg protection device according to claim 2 1, wherein said airbag further includes a lower folded portion ~~is further~~ formed at a lower side of the airbag.

6. (currently amended) A leg protection device according to claim 1, wherein said upper folded portion includes a pleated portion in which ~~the~~ a perimeter of the airbag is folded at least once inwardly between the front portion and the rear portion.

7. (original) A leg protection device according to claim 1, wherein said airbag includes a rolled portion rolled along a horizontal direction relative to the occupant in the folded state, said rolled portion having folded left and right sides.

8. (original) A leg protection device according to claim 1, wherein said airbag includes an upper portion rolled along a horizontal direction relative to the occupant and a lower portion folded over the upper portion in the folded state, said rolled upper portion having folded left and right sides disposed above the folded lower portion.

9. (currently amended) A leg protection device according to claim 7, wherein said folded left and right sides are folded ~~in bellows~~ with pleats or rolled.

10. (currently amended) A leg protection device according to claim 8, wherein said folded left and right sides are folded ~~in bellows~~ with pleats or rolled.

11. (currently amended) A leg protection device according to claim 7, wherein said airbag is arranged such that the upper folded portion ~~at the perimeter~~ expands outwardly between the front and rear portions after the rolled portion is unrolled.

12. (new) A leg protection device according to claim 1, wherein said parts of the left and right side portions in the intermediate folded portion are folded at least once to be located in the casing.

13. (new) A leg protection device according to claim 12, wherein said airbag includes a lower portion located below the casing in the spread state, said lower portion having a portion folded between the front portion and the rear portion and being located above the intermediate folded portion when the intermediate folded portion is formed and disposed in the casing.

14. (new) A leg protection device according to claim 13, wherein said parts of the left and right side portions are folded once to be located inside the casing.

REMARKS

The specification has been reviewed, and clerical errors of the specification have been amended.

In paragraph 6 of the Action, claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. In view of the rejection, claims 9 and 10 have been amended.

In paragraphs 8-10 and 12 of the Action, all the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 or 103(a) by Albright et al., Abe and Dyer. In view of the rejections, claim 1, 4-6 and 11 have been amended, and claims 2 and 3 have been canceled. New claims 12-14 readable on the elected species have been filed.

In claim 1, it is defined that the airbag comprises an upper folded portion folded between the front portion and the rear portion at an upper side of the airbag in a spread state of the airbag, left and right side portions folded over a center area of the airbag with the upper folded portion such that parts of the left and right side portions to be folded later are located laterally outside the casing in a partly folded state of the airbag, and an intermediate folded portion, in another partly folded state of the airbag, having a width to be able to enter into the casing in a direction perpendicular to the left and right side portions. The intermediate folded portion is obtained by folding rearwardly a part of the airbag with the upper folded portion and the left and right side portions several times, and the parts of the left and right side portions located laterally outside the casing are folded on a center area to be completely disposed inside the casing in the folded state.

Especially, the airbag of the invention has the left and right side portions folded over a center area of the airbag with the upper folded portion such that parts of the left and right side portions to be folded later are located laterally outside the casing in the partly folded state of the airbag. Then, the

intermediate folded portion is formed to have a width to be able to enter into the casing in a direction perpendicular to the left and right side portions. The airbag can be quickly and smoothly opened.

In Albright et al., side portions of the airbag are folded to have the length within the size of an inflator 24. Thereafter, upper portion 17 and lower portion 19 are folded and located above the inflator 24.

Therefore, Albright et al. does not have the left and right side portions of claim 1, which are folded over a center area of the airbag with the upper folded portion such that parts of the left and right side portions to be folded later are located laterally outside the casing in a partly folded state of the airbag. Claim 1 is not anticipated or obvious from Albright et al.

In Abe, an airbag as shown in Figs. 18(a)-18(d) has a folded portion 60 at an upper portion of the airbag in the flat state. It is explained that the folded portion as shown in Fig. 18(a) can be folded in any of the folding processes described therein (column 6, lines 14-18). However, in the embodiments of Abe, the portion with the folded portion 60 is simply further folded to have the width of the case. Namely, Abe does not have the left and right side portions folded over a center area of the airbag with the upper folded portion such that parts of the left and right side portions to be folded later are located laterally outside the casing in the partly folded state of the airbag. Claim 1 is not anticipated by Abe.


In Dyer, a part of the airbag is located between upper and lower panels 36, 38, as shown in Fig. 4, and the folded portion as shown in Fig. 4 is further partly rolled as shown in Fig. 8. Thereafter, side portions are folded to have the size corresponding to a canister 30 (Figs. 9 and 13). The extending portion is finally folded.

Dyer, therefore, does not have the left and right side portions folded over a center area of the airbag with the upper folded portion such that parts of the left and right side portions to be folded later are located laterally outside the casing in the partly folded state of the airbag. Claim 1 is not anticipated by Dyer.

As explained above, claim 1 is not anticipated by the cited references. Other claims directly or indirectly depend from claim 1 and have other features of the invention. Claims pending in the application are patentable over the cited references.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

By 
Manabu Kanesaka
Reg. No. 31,467
Agent for Applicants

1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 310
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 519-9785